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# Montana SCHOOLS

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May 1997

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Newsletter of the Montana  
Office of Public Instruction  
Nancy Keenan, Superintendent  
Vol. 40, No. 5

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## MISTA pioneers new process of accreditation Eighteen Montana schools focus on school improvement

**F**or the past year, a self-  
selected group of Mon-  
tana schools have been  
pioneering an alternative  
method for schools to fulfill state  
accreditation requirements. In  
doing so, they are piloting a  
community-based process that  
directly ties accreditation to  
school improvement.

"These schools," said State  
Superintendent Nancy Keenan,  
"are dedicated to providing their  
students with the best education  
possible. They have reached out  
to parents and other community  
members and invested countless  
hours in crafting the foundation  
for an enduring process of school  
improvement. Their efforts will  
pay great dividends—for their  
students, their communities, and  
for all the other schools in Mon-  
tana."

Together with the Office of  
Public Instruction (OPI) and the  
Northwest Association of Schools  
and Colleges (NWASC), these  
schools have joined together to  
form the coalition Montana



Like they are at Frank Brattin Middle School in Colstrip, many Montana  
educators are thinking about summer and school improvement.

Improving Schools Through  
Accreditation (MISTA).

### The accreditation method

Historically, Montana has  
accredited its schools based  
primarily on the school's ability to  
meet uniform state standards.

These provisions include such  
things as limitations for class size,  
assignment of professional staff,  
and the courses and programs  
offered.

In March 1997, however, the  
Montana Board of Public Educa-  
tion adopted an alternative  
method called Performance-Based  
Accreditation (PBA). This method  
represents a welcome change in  
focus believes former Deputy  
Superintendent Jack Copps, who  
continues to work with MISTA.

The connection PBA forges  
between accreditation and school  
improvement Copps says, "pro-  
vides schools with the opportu-  
nity to be known for excellence,  
not simply their compliance with  
quantitative state-mandated  
standards."

The state standards exist to  
provide a framework for the  
quality education guaranteed by  
Montana's Constitution, they do  
not measure what—or whether—  
students learn. The PBA alterna-  
tive allows schools to engage in a  
locally driven and locally con-  
trolled process that allows them to

(Continued on page 5)

## East Helena's Radley Elementary and Middle schools

**M**ontana Improving Schools Through Accreditation (MISTA)  
has given us the opportunity to work with staff, parents, and  
community members for the purpose of developing a  
schoolwide mission and philosophy.

As educators we are excited to be involved in a process that is chal-  
lenging and meaningful. We have taken the time to focus on what we  
teach, and how we teach. We have discussed the importance of student  
goals. We have strived to build consensus among all concerned. This  
process has involved all stakeholders of our greatest resource: "our"  
children. They will benefit from the cooperative efforts of the commu-  
nity in which they live. ■

—Karol Gustin, Radley Elementary School on behalf of the East Helena Radley  
Elementary and Middle School MISTA Committee

Turn to page four for some more information submitted by the schools who are  
members of MISTA and participating in the MISTA process.

## Appropriation provides money for school improvement

**A**fter the dust settled in the  
final hours of the 1997  
Legislative Session, it  
became clear that the Office of  
Public Instruction (OPI) had  
received money to fund the  
School Improvement package  
proposed by State Superintendent  
Nancy Keenan.

While the actual appropriation  
represents less than a third of the  
original \$2.6 million budget  
request, Keenan says she is eager  
to begin the work the proposal

contains.

Because of the level of funding,  
the work will proceed more  
slowly than originally hoped. But,  
Keenan notes, "With everyone's  
help, the statewide school im-  
provement effort will move  
forward." (For more on this, see  
Keenan's column on page 2).

### Montana Learner Goals

That effort includes starting a  
process to review and revise the  
Model Learner Goals, which

accompany the Montana Accredi-  
tation Standards.

"These goals have not been  
reviewed since the eighties, and it  
is long overdue," said Keenan.  
"Montana's current standards do  
not even address technology, let  
alone the more recent develop-  
ments which have had profound  
effects on education and the skills  
that our children will need to get  
a job in tomorrow's workplace"

(Continued on page 7)

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## Message from Nancy Keenan

### School improvement for everyone

In this issue of *Montana Schools*, I am pleased to highlight the exciting effort underway by a group of Montana schools to involve their communities in developing content and performance-based measures for academic achievement. Talented and dedicated individuals have stepped forward and put themselves on the "cutting edge" as they strive to improve schools through the accreditation process. These efforts include building a knowledge-base for school improvement through self-evaluation, peer review and onsite visitations. It is my hope that all schools will benefit from the knowledge gained through the success and, yes sometimes, failure of these experimental efforts.

#### Improvement for all schools

As I watch the MISTA schools' efforts take flight, I understand that it is my responsibility as state superintendent to ensure that all schools are involved in efforts to expand educational opportunities and improve student performance and achievement.



With funding that OPI received from the 1997 legislature for its School Improvement proposal, OPI will begin a process of reviewing and revising the Model Learner Goals, which accompany the Montana Accreditation Standards. These revised goals will set expectations for what students should know and be able to do at the primary, middle and high school levels. To hold our schools

and ourselves accountable to these learner goals, we will work with members of the education community to identify a set of Montana indicators of quality schools. We will collect and analyze school data to assess how well our students and our schools are doing at meeting these goals. Most importantly, we will share the assessment of our educational system with the public through the widespread distribution of a Montana Educational Profile.

#### A group effort

Montana educators have a wealth of talent and experience to bring to this school improvement effort. I ask for your assistance in local and statewide school improvement efforts. As OPI staff and others begin to build the structure for a successful statewide school improvement process, there will be many opportunities to participate. Please feel free to contact my office to learn more about our plans. And look for future issues of *Montana Schools* to provide more details.

#### Thanks for everything

Thank you all for your sharing your energy, talents, and creativity with our school children this past year. With all the talk of change and improvement, I never lose sight of the fact that our Montana schools, and school teachers, are producing well-educated, high-achieving students who are motivated to learn. You can each be proud of your efforts and your profession and you each have my respect. Enjoy this long-awaited summer and a well-deserved rest.

*Nancy Keenan*



## Montana's Constitution turns 25

### Educational celebration planned

Twenty-five years ago this June, Montana voters ratified our state's constitution. To mark this milestone, the Montana Constitutional Society and the Montana League of Women Voters are sponsoring an anniversary celebration. Scheduled for June 27-28 in Helena, this free, two-day event will be held in the House Chambers in the Montana State Capitol.

Both days are packed with presentations and panel discussions on a variety of topics associated with state constitutional revision and the history of

Montana's constitutional revisions and their effects. This event presents a great opportunity for teachers and students to learn more about Montana's Constitution, its development, the influence it exerted on other states seeking to revise their constitutions, and the impact it has had on Montana law and society. Everyone is invited.

As an added benefit, this weekend coincides with the Montana Jazz Festival. Learn about the Montana Constitution by day and listen to the strains of Dixie Land Jazz by night.

## Recertification alert

Remember—as of 1997, college credit is required for Class 2 recertification.

#### Requirement

The 60 units required to renew Class 2 certification must include at least 40 renewal units worth of college credit. These can be earned through three semester credits (45 renewal units) or four quarter credits (40 renewal units). Class 2 certificate holders may earn the remaining 15 or 20 renewal units through additional college credit or inservice training.

#### Deadline

College credit or other renewal units earned after August 31, 1997, cannot be used to renew

certificates that expire in 1997. While original certificates are needed to verify units earned through inservice training, either original copies of grade slips or college transcripts may verify college credit.

#### Only Class 2 affected

This rule applies only to Class 2 certificates. Class 1 teaching, Class 3 administrative, and Class 6 specialist certificate holders may continue to use either inservice renewal units or college credits for renewal.

For more information, call OPI certification staff after 10 a.m. (444-3150) or Don Freshour, Director of Certification (444-2577). ■

## DEQ offers building assessment program

Is your school district planning any building or building system improvements within the next three years? Are you interested in reducing operating costs? If the answer is yes to either question, keep reading...

#### Energy efficiency might make building improvements possible

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) E=MC<sup>2</sup> Technical Assistance Program might offer school districts an opportunity to leverage funds for building improvements while saving energy and reducing operating costs.

Keeping operating costs down is a necessity for public school districts. Improvements in energy efficiency reduce future utility costs, and this, in turn, reduces a facility's operating expenditures.

How can energy improvements leverage funds for building maintenance and improvements? Energy improvements reduce the amount of energy needed within a building, thereby creating an annual savings. The money previously spent on utility bills can be applied toward facility improvements or used to pay for facility improvement financing.

When undertaking building

improvement, school district personnel need information on existing building systems and available options. And, as part of its E=MC<sup>2</sup> Technical Assistance Program, DEQ grants districts up to 50 percent of the costs of a Preliminary Building Assessment.

#### Preliminary Building Assessments

With a Preliminary Building Assessment (PBA) districts can get information on energy savings and cost estimates on certain building improvements without the high cost and time lag of past technical assistance studies. The PBA also addresses upcoming equipment replacement needs, whether the heating, ventilation and cooling system is operating at design specifications, and the potential benefits of "recommissioning" the existing system. After receiving the PBA, school district personnel can prioritize projects and make informed maintenance and upgrade decisions.

#### Good opportunity exists

The 1997 Legislature appropriated \$12.5 million in one-time aid for school districts for technology acquisition, textbooks, library materials, and building maintenance. This money will be allocated to schools based on the number of students (ANB) each district serves. Any building improvement projects that districts decide to undertake with their share would qualify for DEQ's E=MC<sup>2</sup> program. ■

For more information, please contact Linda Beadle, DEQ, Technical and Financial Assistance Bureau (tel: 444-6777 or 444-6836).

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## Former deputy superintendent named Montana's 1997 Retired Educator of the Year

**A**lve Thomas, former deputy superintendent of public instruction, recently received the 1997 Retired Educator of the Year Award from the Montana Retired Teachers and School Personnel Association.

The award, which honors outstanding educators who continue to contribute to their communities, is part of the 50th anniversary celebration for the National Retired Teachers Association. To be eligible for the state award, nominees must have retired from the field of education with at least ten years of active service.

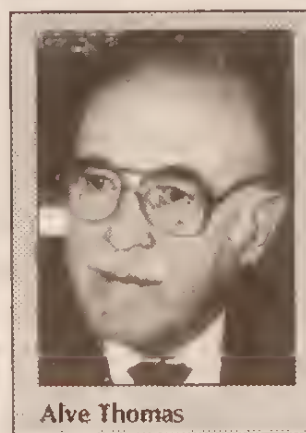
Upon being notified of Thomas's selection as Montana's Retired Educator of the Year, State Superintendent Nancy Keenan was not surprised, "Alve," she said, "is the perfect example of a committed and gifted educator. Throughout his career, first in the classroom and finally as Deputy Superintendent, he made a difference in the lives of Montana's children, teachers, and schools."

Thomas's dedication to education and his personal efforts have not gone unnoticed. He has received both the Golden Apple Award from the Montana Educa-

tion Association as well as the Rural Education Conference Award; he was named OPI Educator of the Year; and, in 1981, Montana's governor issued a declaration praising Thomas for all of his efforts on behalf of education and children in our state.

Perhaps more telling than these statewide awards, however, is the fact that the people who work and worked with Thomas hold him in high regard.

Gail Grey, Assistant Deputy of



Alve Thomas

Public Instruction, worked with Thomas at OPI. "Alve never just demanded," she reminisced. "He rolled up his sleeves and gave his staff the support and consistency they needed to provide assistance to Montana's schools. His positive attitude, contagious smile,

and good sense of humor carried us through many trying times."

Thomas continues to remain active on issues affecting education and retired educators. ■

## Bridges

### Building bridges to tomorrow: The Presidents' Summit for America's Future

**T**he media has made much ado about the President's Summit for America's Future. Chaired by General Colin Powell and attended by presidents Clinton, Bush, Carter, and Ford, the Presidents' Summit brought thousands of people from across the nation together in Philadelphia on April 27-29, 1997.

Summit attendees were treated to much pomp and celebration. Philadelphia showcased its local cuisine and musical talents, and Hollywood stars, politicians, musicians, and others the public holds in high esteem trotted across one stage or another.

But the ceremony and the entertainment were only accompaniments to the serious business at hand. And that business was determining how to recruit and direct volunteer efforts on behalf of our nation's children.

#### OPI representation

Assistant Deputy Superintendent Gail Gray, was a delegate on the five member team that Montana sent to the Presidents' Summit.

While she was "wowed" by the extent of the summit preparations, the thin that impressed Gray the most was the *entire book* of names of corporations, foundations, and individuals who had already pledged something specific to the voluntary effort on behalf of America's youth.

In addition, Gray said, the message that none of us can accomplish it all alone, that we need to "set aside the things that set us apart," if we are going to save America's future, was powerful, especially since it was delivered in so many ways and by so many people over the course of the Summit.

#### The challenge

Reality provides the challenge the Summit addresses. The growing ranks of children who have no supervision after school, the risky choices that many of America's youth make, the fact

that American children are dropping out of school and society at greater rates than ever before, that homicide has become the second leading cause of death for people between the ages of 15 and 24, and that 15 million young people live in poverty.

According to conference organizers, these realities have extreme social and fiscal consequences. They cause many young people have no access to the basic resources that could allow them to grow into healthy, productive members of our society, fulfilling their potential and their dreams. And, organizers note, "for every young person who chooses or is forced onto the wrong road in life, other Americans will pay more than \$1 million in their lifetime.

#### The five things children need

In the words of Gen. Powell, "the five resources that our youngsters need to 'make it' in today's world [are]:

1. An ongoing relationship with a caring adult—mentor, tutor, coach,
2. Safe places and structured activities during non-school hours to learn and grow,
3. A healthy start and a healthy future,
4. A marketable skill through effective education, and
5. An opportunity to give back to their communities through their own service."

#### The Summit's goal

The goal set by the Summit's organizers is to recruit a volunteer army of men and women, community-based organizations, and corporations who will work together to provide at least 2 million additional young people with access to all five of these fundamental resources by the end of the year 2000. In addition, organizers aim to connect another 5 million young people to at least one of the resources that children need to maximize their potential, live the American dream and give

back to society in meaningful ways. "The task," said Gray, "seems extremely ambitious."

#### Information on the website

As a member of the Montana delegation, Gray attended the work sessions in which state delegations were asked to come up with a plan to meet the challenges posed by reality and contribute to this goal. If you are interested in the draft ideas, visit the *America's Promise* website at <<http://www.americaspromise.org>>.

#### The future

The Presidents' Summit, said

organizers, was the start not the culmination of the efforts. As Gen. Powell's stated, "Our success is going to depend far more on the next three years than what we do over the next three days. The real work begins when we return home and roll up our sleeves."

So, yes, the Presidents' summit created much ado, but it was *not* about nothing. Instead the Summit presented people with the opportunity to enjoy themselves and see the famous and influential. More importantly, however, the Presidents' Summit allowed people to get together, and plan for the future of our youth and our nation. ■

### OPI essay challenge winners announced

**T**he Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has announced the winners of the statewide essay contest on *Aids Issues in Society*. The six finalists and their teachers received cash scholarships and certificates at a ceremony in Helena on May 2, 1997, at the Capitol.

The winners of the \$250 scholarships are Anne Meester, Lincoln County High School and Lindsay Wing, Butte Central High School. The four finalists of \$125 scholarships are Jessica Umphres, Centerville; Alan T. Bittig, Alberton; Maggie Austin, West Yellowstone; and Karen Lester, Roundup.

#### The contest

Data from the Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey show that high school students tend to engage in more health risk behaviors as they age. For example, seniors drink alcohol, use tobacco, and engage in sex at a greater rate than ninth graders. Unfortunately, data from the Montana School Health Education Profile Survey

show that students receive less ongoing health education during their last two years in high school.

So, sadly, over the very years that youth are increasing their involvement in health risk behaviors, schools are providing less if any at all, ongoing or reinforcing education on health behaviors and healthy decisions.

#### Keep the discussion going

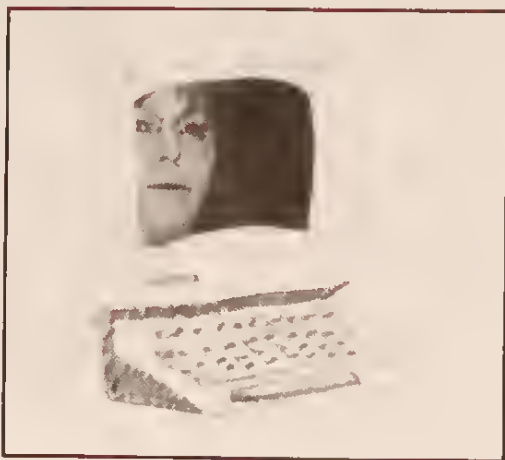
As a means to involve students in self-study of contemporary health issues and to facilitate teacher-led classroom discussions of these issues, primarily in grades 11-12 where required health education classes no longer occur, OPI's Division of Health Enhancement and Safety issued a scholarship challenge. The challenge was part of assigned class work in senior government classes or in junior and senior English classes with each school assuring that the information provided to students was age-appropriate and within the parameters of the district's health enhancement curriculum. ■



# A few MISTA members report on their efforts

**E**ighteen Montana schools from 13 school districts elected to join the Montana Improving Schools Through Accreditation (MISTA) consortium.

These schools (see list on page 6) are true pioneers. A year ago, they volunteered to form the core group of schools who will develop, field test, and establish procedures for implementing the five steps for using accreditation as a springboard for school improvement. This is a concept that is rapidly gaining support in many states.



"Ms. Mac" makes an appearance at the MISTA March training. Concerns about technology crop up in many discussions on school improvement.

## The consortium

While the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NWASC) are MISTA members, the pilot schools are the determining force in the consortium. MISTA's four-member executive board is co-chaired by Kathy Lockyear, Helena, and Carol Wicker, Colstrip. Last summer, the executive committee entered into a partnership with the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) to provide for the necessary training to carry out the school improvement process.

## The schools' efforts

Though the member schools differ greatly from one another in their size, geographic location, and district organization, they share a strong commitment to community involvement, school improvement, and quality education. This past year their school improvement teams have attended training sessions and put in countless hours organizing local support and volunteers to complete the first four steps of the accreditation process. MISTA schools submitted the following articles and information about their school improvement work

## Charlo's efforts to improve schools

**C**harlo's School District 73 held three public meetings during the school year. The meetings involved writing a mission statement, identifying community values and beliefs, and developing educational goals for the 21st century.

### Student involvement

After the November meeting on educational goals, the senior students in Mrs. Janet Dekmar's English class were asked to categorize and edit the educational goals, posed as the question: "What educational goals should students achieve to be successful in the 21st century?" This was a very valuable exercise as it provided the Charlo graduates with a set of community expectations and prerequisites to success in the workplace.

### Work continues

Charlo's School Improvement Team is now in the process of completing a School Profile and preparing for a fall meeting to focus on the development of selected educational goals. ■

—Steve Sammons, Principal, Charlo Junior and Senior High School

## Colstrip sets sail for school improvement

**F**rank Brattin Middle School in Colstrip is riding the wave of future educational seas along with other northwest schools by piloting a new accreditation process which fulfills accreditation requirements while fueling school improvement.

### A common undertaking

The students, staff, and parents of our school community embarked on a journey to increase the value of school accreditation by implementing school improvement planning. It is what quality schools have been doing for years. The PBA process provides the motivation, structure, and assistance for us to improve.

### The process at FBMS

The journey began in the spring of 1996 when the staff decided to pursue the accreditation option. Volunteers comprise the steering committee, and they have received training to assist in the

direction of the PBA process. Additional committees were established as a result of community meetings to encourage other stakeholders to share in the

**The students, staff, and parents of our school community embarked on a journey to increase the value of school accreditation by implementing school improvement planning. It is what quality schools have been doing for years.**

process. Those committees include the Steering, Community Profile, the Student Profile, the Mission and Goals, and the Beliefs and Values committees.

We have developed a mission

statement and have gathered demographic information about our students and community which has been profiled. Learner goals will be examined and analyzed with respect to our school's educational goals. One or two of the educational goals will be targeted and exit standards developed.

This will allow us to see how well our school's educational practices align with student performance. We then will draft a school improvement plan.

### The players

The crew of this adventure has been dedicated and involved. They have worked diligently on the various committees. They are made up of parents and staff with the aid of students who have contributed their views about their school by completing questionnaires and surveys. This has been a shared learning experience for us all. It is not often that we share practices and techniques with colleagues, let alone with members of the community.

Our three-year odyssey continues with those who have volunteered to serve on board as our committee members. ■

—Joette Speake, Co-Chair, FBMS Steering Committee

**This has been a shared learning experience for us all. It is not often that we share practices and techniques with colleagues, let alone with members of the community.**

—Joette Speake, Co-Chair of Colstrip's MISTA Steering Committee

## The MISTA process gives individual schools room to improve

**I**n an age of cookie cutter mass production, a new process in school accreditation that allows for individuality has been approved by the Montana Board of Public Education.

### The process starts

In September of 1996, Billings Central Catholic High School began as one of 11 pilot schools in the Performance-Based Accreditation (PBA) process that is being piloted by MISTA.

Ron Nistler, principal, appointed Michele Mattix as the chair of the steering committee, which is composed of teachers,

students, administrators, and parents.

Central "kicked off" the process by calling a stakeholders' meeting. Students, community members, and school personnel gathered to discuss the needs and visions for the school. The adults came away especially impressed with the students' maturity and ability to articulate the vision they have of their educational process.

### The school profile

Creating the school profile was probably the most time-consuming task. The project involved much of the staff as well as several parents. Mr. Nistler

updating. However, even in its infant stages, the committee can see new directions for our school.

### Reactions to the process

There has been a variety of reactions to the training and work that have gone into Phase One of the PBA-Process. Many teachers feel that establishing the goals for our school has been energizing and affirming. Others also feel that the process validates the directions for school

**Billings Central is excited about this process as it is challenging us in areas where growth is needed. Rather than causing us to jump through the same administrative hoops as everyone else in order to be accredited, PBA is an authentic process.**

constantly reminds the committee that the profile is a "work in progress" and will need continual

(Continued on page 5)



# Time marches on!

## Lodge Grass looks to the improvement of its schools

**L**odge Grass Public Schools are part of the Montana Improving Schools Through Accreditation (MISTA) pilot program. In doing so, the district has committed itself to improving the organizational and instructional programs for *all* students, K-12.

### The process starts

Initially, the district's elementary and high school principals attended the training sessions sponsored by the Northwest Accreditation Association, OPI, and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). In December, the district hired a School Improvement and Federal Programs Director, Ms. Sharon Stewart Peregoy, a former Education Specialist for Interface Network, Inc.

### Community involvement

Beginning in January, Stewart-Peregoy has assembled a steering committee comprised of all stakeholders in the Lodge Grass

community. This team has been receiving training and has participated in the faculty and community meetings to garner input regarding Lodge Grass's belief and mission statements.

In addition, the district has held a series of monthly meetings for stakeholders to discuss and

ment process by the end of the school year when the learner goals for graduation are identified and adopted by the Lodge Grass School Board.

### Next step

The steering committee will be convening study groups next school year to explore alternatives in school organization, instruction and assessment. As a district that has a 98 percent American Indian and Crow Indian student population that either speaks or understands the Crow language, a relevant and responsive school organization and curriculum is our major challenge.

The Lodge Grass community and faculty have clearly stated,

**As a district that has a 98 percent American Indian and Crow Indian student population that either speaks or understands the Crow language, a relevant and responsive school organization and curriculum is our major challenge.**

develop these statements. Lodge Grass has been fortunate that its high school students have participated in the monthly community meetings.

The district will complete the first phase of the school improve-



Sharon Stewart Peregoy and Leslie Thomas, members of the Lodge Grass MISTA team, work on a group exercise during the March training session in Bozeman.

"We believe that all students regardless of economic level, race, creed, religion, gender, disability or talent have potential and should receive opportunities to grow and be enriched academically, socially, physically, and spiritually." Time marches on as we seek ways to improve our schools in Lodge Grass. ■

—Sharon Stewart Peregoy, Lodge Grass Public Schools

## Colstrip's MISTA team profiles its community...

**O**ur school is located in Rosebud county which is an island of ponderosa pine in a plateaued and valleyed region in southeastern Montana. Frank Brattin Middle School serves students who live in the rural community of Colstrip and the outlying areas of Lame Deer, Ashland, Busby, Muddy Cluster and Birney. Some of our students choose to travel over 130 miles a day, round trip, to attend our school. The population of our students at Frank Brattin Middle School is 52 percent Caucasian and 48 percent Native American, reflecting those students educated from the outlying areas.

Our school community encompasses private range land, the company-owned land of Montana Power Company, Western Energy Company, Big Sky Coal Company, and the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. The diversity of land ownership and use and the resulting employment of our population contribute to the uniqueness of our community and our middle school as well. We are remote from larger

communities and limited in retail shopping and other services. Access to larger or other communities that offer these services including additional educational opportunities, broader entertain-

ment resources, major medical services and retail shopping may result in a commute from 50 to 240 miles round trip.

Excellent recreational opportunities and facilities abound in our community, which is not the norm for a town of our size. A nine-hole golf course,

swimming pool with water slide, parks with playground equipment, miles of bike and walking paths, a lake for swimming and fishing, a rodeo arena, and indoor sports facility are enjoyed by Colstrip residents. An art and historical center and local community theater extend our cultural experiences. ■

—From the FBMS Community Profile: 1997

**Information for the community profile was difficult to obtain because we aren't an incorporated town. Statistics differed depending upon the sources contacted. What became clear, however, was our resilience, even in our isolation.**

—Leah Schmirler-Flaten, FBMS Community Profile Committee Chair

## MISTA pioneers

(Continued from page 1)

meet accreditation requirements through a school improvement plan which focuses on student performance.

### School improvement

School improvement planning is what quality schools have been doing for years. The five-step accreditation process that the PBA alternative lays out, however, provides the motivation, structure, and assistance for schools to continue to improve. It encourages schools to define local standards and to develop instruction and monitor student performance in relation to those standards, thereby helping them make accreditation a natural part of their local educational planning and evaluation processes.

(Continued on page 6)

## Billings Central

(Continued from page 4)

improvement that Billings Central had already taken.

Helene Waage, a parent and a school psychologist on Billings Central's PBA Steering Committee, says of the process, "I like it because it individualizes for the needs of each school. It doesn't compare us to other schools that may not have the same needs and concerns that we have."

**Enthusiast reception**  
Billings Central is excited

about this process as it is challenging us in areas where growth is needed.

**I like it because it individualizes for the needs of each school. It doesn't compare us to other schools that may not have the same needs and concerns that we have.**

—Helene Waage, parent and school psychologist

Rather than causing us to jump through the same administrative hoops as everyone else in order to be accredited, PBA is an authentic process. There is room in this process for our unique circumstances as a private, Catholic high school. ■

—Sister Elizabeth Youngs, Billings Central Catholic High School



## Hardin Primary School

### Student Educational Goals:

#### The student will:

- Become a lifelong learner;
- Develop and maintain responsibility/accountability for life choices and actions;
- Develop a positive attitude of self and a willingness to learn to his/her highest potential;
- Develop a positive respect for self, others and environments;
- Involve the parents in his/her education;
- Develop the necessary skills to become a cooperative team member.
- Develop the basic skills to be actively involved in change.
- Develop the skills to achieve at his/her highest potential;
- Become a critical thinker and responsible problem solver,
- Create meaning from what is learned and share with others.
- Learn to apply and adapt technology.

### Belief Statements

- We believe each child has the right to a warm, safe, supportive and accepting environment.
- We believe each student has a right to feel successful and reach his/her full potential.
- We believe each student should respect self, others, and environment.
- We believe each student should be an active participant, responsible and accountable for his/her own learning.
- We believe parents, teachers and students should be actively working together to prepare students for the future.
- We believe students should be given the skills so that they are motivated to become lifelong learners.
- We believe that learning experiences should relate to the world outside the school.
- We believe that each teacher should be an active participant, responsible and accountable for his/her own teaching.
- We believe technology should be seen as a tool, not to supplant but to enhance the uniqueness of the child.
- We believe that students should be prepared for a changing future which includes technology.

The above is an example of the student educational goals and Belief statements articulated by MISTA schools.

## MISTA and school improvement

(Continued from page 5)

Using this model, educators and other community members seek answers to five fundamental questions:

- ✓ What are the particular needs and strengths of this community and its students?
- ✓ What is the mission of this school and its philosophy of education?
- ✓ What are students expected to learn and be able to do, and what levels of performance does this school and community deem as acceptable?
- ✓ How effective are the instructional methods and organizational systems of this school in fulfilling its mission?
- ✓ What steps should be taken to improve the educational program of this school?

The answers to these questions correspond to the following documents. The information in the first four documents provide the foundation for a school's improvement plan.

- ✓ A student and a community profile
- ✓ A mission statement
- ✓ Desired learner results
- ✓ An analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness
- ✓ A school improvement plan

#### A lot of work

This process of accreditation is not simpler, cheaper or quicker than the traditional method. As the MISTA member schools have experienced firsthand, each of these steps requires time, effort, and the collaboration of all stakeholders in the school and community.

They also require a certain amount of "know how" and skill, in organizing and soliciting input from the school's community as well as recognizing, analyzing, and processing the information that a school gathers. Last summer the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) offered to provide MISTA members with the training that their school improvement teams needed.

Nancey Olson, who along with Joan Shaughnessy has provided the NWREL's training, explains that her employer feels that "since Montana's pilot schools are the forerunners of a national movement, working with MISTA complements NWREL's research into school improvement processes." In return, schools agreed to send representatives to three training sessions each year, replicate the training for their school's staff, and carry out the school improvement processes.

#### So why do schools participate?

Why did schools elect to undertake this rigorous and time-consuming method of pursuing accreditation through school improvement?

Kathy Lockyear, MISTA Co-Chair and Helena Capital High School Principal, explained, "We got involved in this because it is a living, breathing process that we can work with." Sister Elizabeth Youngs, writing for Billings Central High School, the only private school in MISTA, noted that, "there is room in this process for our unique circumstances."

"Clearly," said State Superintendent Keenan, "these schools are part of this process because they want to offer their students a quality education."

#### Accomplishments

The articles and information schools submitted for this issue of *Montana Schools* highlight what some of the MISTA members feel their schools have accomplished thus far. It is hard to believe that less than a year has passed since MISTA was formed. As the following excerpt from the March 25, 1997, issue of the MISTA newsletter, the *School Improvement Bulletin*, indicates, a lot has been packed into that short span of time.

"It's hard to believe that only 13 months ago, the [PBA] user's manual was published. Since that time, MISTA was formed, 18 schools have committed themselves to improvement, NWREL has provided six days of training, and schools have devoted countless hours to community and staff meetings—writing mission statements, values and beliefs, educational goals defined by behaviors and characteristics, and exit performance standards. ... Returning to their schools after the March training, staff members are ...target[ing] one of their educational goals, identify[ing] barriers, and form[ing] study groups to examine ways to overcome those barriers."

#### Future plans

MISTA and NWREL plan to press on over the summer and during the next school year. The MISTA steering committee will work with NWREL to plan training for "Response Teams," which will provide evaluations and advice as schools formulate and begin implementing a portion of their school improvement plans. Member schools are aiming to start full implementation by January 1998. ■

**I like the fact that we are going out and getting parents' opinions. It's their school—their kids. Sometimes we (the staff) see things in a different perspective from the inside.**

—Jane Pierce, Colstrip 7th grade science teacher

### MISTA Member Schools

Billings Central High School  
 Billings Senior High School  
 Charlo Elementary,  
 Charlo 7-8 and High School  
 Colstrip (Frank Brattin) Middle School  
 Colstrip High School  
 Eastgate School, East Helena  
 Radley Elementary and Middle School, East Helena  
 Flathead High School  
 Havre High School  
 Helena Capital High School  
 Helena High School  
 Hardin Primary  
 Lodge Grass School  
 Lodge Grass 7-8 and High School



The school improvement team at Colstrip's Frank Brattin Middle School poses for a group photo.

Joette Speake

### Mission Statement from Hardin Primary School

In partnership with the community, Hardin Primary School will provide a secure climate where respect for self, others, and environment will be the foundation.

The student will actively participate in real life learning experiences to gain knowledge, grow in wisdom, develop confidence and value lifelong learning, always striving to reach his/her highest potential.



# Appropriation for statewide school improvement

(continued from page 1)

## Educational profile

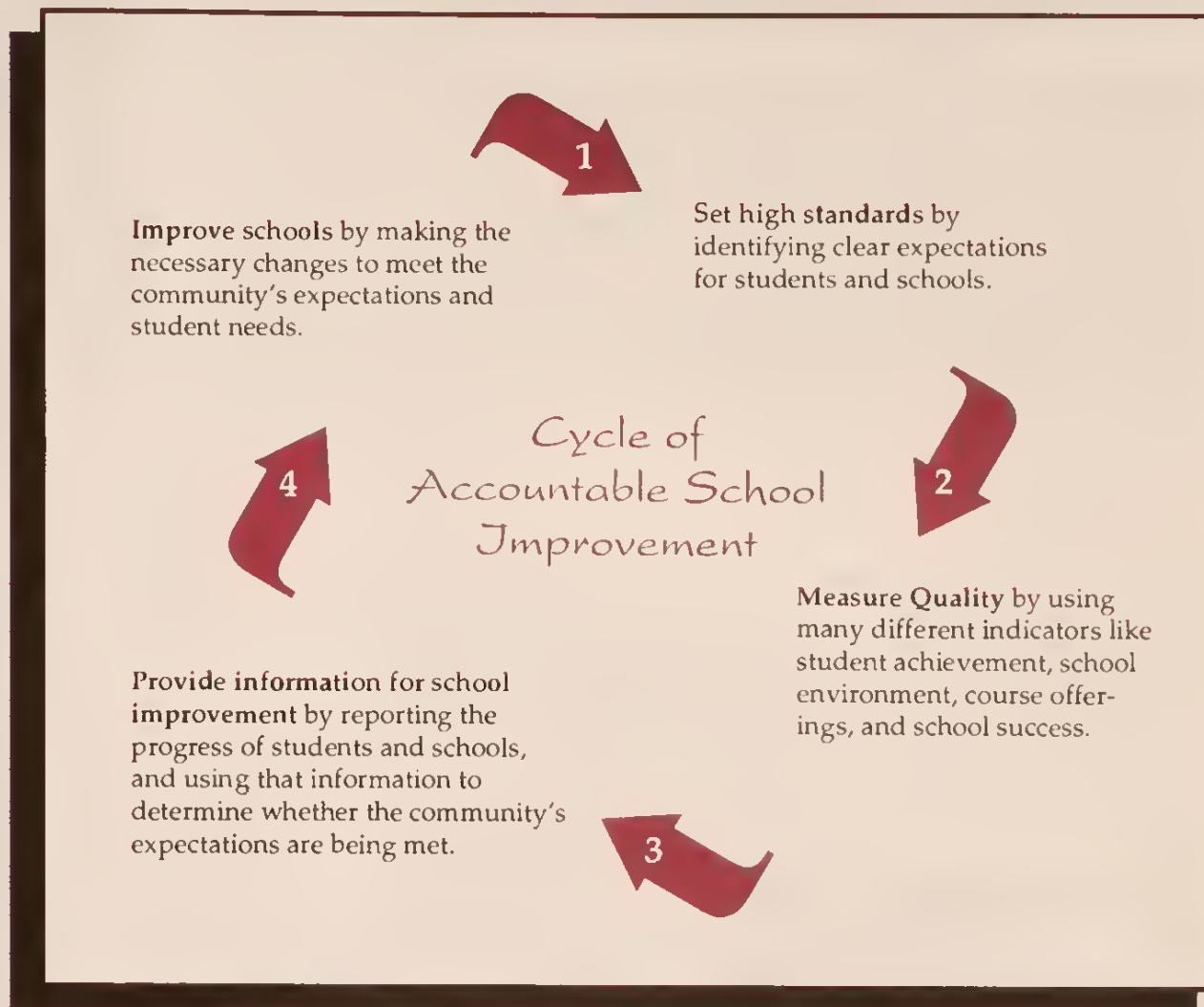
The package for school improvement also includes plans to develop and distribute a Montana Educational Profile, which will contain an analysis of how Montana students and schools are doing. That analysis will be based on key Montana indicators of quality schools. Those indicators will be identified by members of the education community working together with OPI staff.

"Accountability is important," stated Keenan. "The Educational Profile will give Montana educators a chance to see the 'big picture'— we will be able to show the public where we are succeeding and we will be able to determine, for ourselves, where we need to improve."

## Accountable school improvement

Improving Montana's schools and educational system is a cycle. We need to know if students are able to attain the standards to which the real world will hold them accountable. And, just as the world and workplace changes, so do the skills that students need to learn in order to be competitive.

The Cycle of Accountable School Improvement to the left outlines the four steps that communities can consider when working to improve their schools. Each step in the cycle is elucidated below. OPI staff remain committed to providing parents, policy makers, educators, and the general public with the information and technical help they need to identify problem areas in their schools and to implement effective changes at the local level.



Working together, Montanans will be able to evaluate the educational quality of their schools, target their resources and make

informed decisions about how best to continue improving the education offered Montana's children. ■

1

## Why set high standards?

Setting high standards for learning:

- provides clear expectations for students, schools and systems;
- establishes a yardstick for how good is good enough;
- allows focused decision-making based on common information; and
- guides the direction for change, future needs, and technologies.

Hundreds of Montana teachers, parents, and other community members worked together in the 1980s to set the standards that currently determine what is taught in our classrooms. Although they were developed prior to widespread use of email, the Internet, and even computer networks, those standards have not been revised to reflect these developments and the changing educational needs and new opportunities those developments represent.

2

## How do we measure our schools' quality?

By establishing an accountability system that provides for:

- meaningful measures of progress that the public has identified as valuable in determining the quality of schools, including:
  - student achievement*: standardized tests & performance levels
  - school environment*: safety, parent satisfaction, & community volunteers
  - course offerings*: basic & advanced courses, technology, & access to school-to-work opportunities
  - school success*: honors, accomplishments, graduation rate
- clear and understandable reporting on the progress of students and schools toward high levels of expected performance.

4

## How do we provide direction for school improvement?

By assisting educators and community members to use the information in the statewide and local school profiles to:

- identify the strengths and weaknesses of their local schools;
- pinpoint the probable causes of those identified strengths and weaknesses; and
- develop a constructive plan for local school improvement that targets local resources and focuses local efforts on those causes of concern.

3

## How do we provide information for school improvement?

By giving parents, educators, and communities a means that they can use to understand how their local schools and students measure up to community expectations and compare to other schools around the state, nation, and world through:

- a statewide profile of Montana schools that will help gauge the effectiveness of Montana's educational system; and
- a local profile containing local measures of progress that allow parents, educators, and other community members to evaluate the effectiveness of their local schools.

## How will the school accountability process improve schools?

By making all Montanans aware not only of statewide and local expectations for students and school systems, but also of the strengths and weaknesses of their local schools, the school accountability process will give every Montanan the ability to:

- form a factual picture of the work that is done in Montana's schools and the challenges and opportunities educators and students face every day;
- obtain information about statewide and national educational standards and the way

- their local schools measure up;
- weigh the information and make informed decisions about how to improve Montana's schools; and
- get involved to make their local schools better.

Technology is an important tool necessary both to provide a quality education for Montana's students and to implement the steps of the school improvement cycle.

- Technology expands the educational resources available to Montana schools. The potential for increased course offerings and better teaching and learning is critical, especially for Montana's smaller, rural schools.
- In order to be employable in tomorrow's workplace, Montana students will need basic skills in using various forms of technology.
- Technology and electronic data management will be an essential tool for collecting data to measure and report school improvement.



# Team Nutrition in Montana

## Schools make learning healthy habits fun

Montana schools are teaming up to celebrate good food and are having a lot of fun as they implement the Healthy School Meals for Children Act. To help support this effort, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) launched its Team Nutrition Program which encourages schools, parents, and community members to form partnerships in teaching children the importance of good nutrition. "It's so fun to see the wide variety of events occurring around the state to celebrate good nutrition," states Katie Bark, Coordinator of the Nutrition Education and Training (NET) program. "We are pleased with the efforts of schools that are working to serve healthy school meals and to promote good nutrition through nutrition education in the cafeteria and classroom." Read about some of the schools' different activities below.



Townsend students examine a blob of fat as a portion of activities that the Townsend area schools put on.

### Lone Rock School helps start a community garden

The Lone Rock School, Headstart, and the Boy and Girl Scouts in Stevensville are teaming up on a community garden this summer.

"This project," states Dr. Louise Bell, Lone Rock principal, "is a great team effort and a wonderful opportunity for the school and community to work together for

everyone's benefit."

The garden groundbreaking is scheduled for May 16 and students have already started seedlings to plant. Local businesses are donating seeds, tools, and supplies.

By late summer, the garden will help provide fresh produce to the school food service program, Headstart, needy families, and the local food bank. Through this hands-on project, children will learn about basic nutrition and agriculture while providing nutritious and tasty foods to the community. ■

### Hardin celebrates Agriculture/Nutrition Day

On May 9, Hardin Intermediate School, Big Horn County Extension Service and community volunteers will celebrate the value of agriculture and proper nutrition. Students will rotate through 16 different activity stations—ranging from

Nutrition Bingo to Beef Nutrition to Tin Can Ice Cream—to experience firsthand the value of enjoying a variety of foods. This annual event lets local farmers, ranchers, and community members team up with school staff to teach children about nutrition. ■

### Billings schools teach readin', writin' & rice krispies

Last fall, the Billings school district helped promote the importance of a good breakfast by celebrating *National Breakfast Matters Day*. Hosted by the Yellowstone County Nutrition

Coalition (YCNC), this event featured nutrition promotions at the schools, senior citizen centers and homeless shelter and a media campaign.

The coalition includes local dietitians, hospitals, members of the Yellowstone County Extension Service and the Billings Public School Food Service, and other community members. "Our goal was to make kids, parents, seniors, and the entire community more aware of the importance of eating breakfast," states Terry Egan, YCNC member. In addition, Darrin Helfrecht, Billings Public Schools food service director, termed the event a success because "it reminded parents breakfast is available for children at many of our schools." ■

### Sidney celebrates National Nutrition Month

In honor of National Nutrition Month, student chefs from the elementary schools in Sidney helped school food service personnel plan and prepare a meal that they served to parents, fellow students, and community members on Friday, April 11. To emphasize the benefits of eating five fruits and vegetables each day, diners played *5-A-Day Bingo*. A free-will donation was accepted from dinner guests and over \$500 was raised for the national *Feed the Children* organization.

"By being involved in the menu planning process, the kids became more aware of their daily nutritional needs," noted Richard Hobbs, Sidney Public Schools food service director. "At the same time," he added, "students felt good about being able to help children less fortunate than them through this fun event." ■



A student stirs a pot of gravy for the dinner cooked by Sidney-area students as a fundraiser to feed homeless children.

This past year, Team Nutrition Schools could defray a portion of the costs for their annual nutrition event by applying for mini-grants from the Nutrition Education Training (NET) Program.

The NET Program also distributed "Team up for Food, Fun & Fitness" packets to school food authorities. This new resource is designed to help provide the tools needed to celebrate the Food Guide Pyramid in a school-sponsored event.

Additionally, Montana schools can avail themselves of the many resources the NET Program offers. These include books, kits, and the 12 regional Nutrition Training Teams which can assist school staff with nutrition education activities. For more information on these resources or becoming a Team Nutrition School, call Katie Bark, Montana State University NET Coordinator (tel: 994-5641; email: <uhdkb@montana.edu>). ■

## NuMenus adds flexibility to school menu planning

Since this past school year, schools can choose to plan their menus using the computer software program *Nutrient-Based Menu Planning System* (NuMenus). Schools using NuMenus must meet specific calorie and nutrient levels for age-specific student groups and implement the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. This year, 77 school food authorities opted for NuMenus. Food service managers made the following comments on the new system.

When you show someone a week's worth of menus with calories, sodium, protein, and nutrition spelled out, it makes it all worthwhile. —Judi Darnier, Whitefish School

NuMenus has helped us lower our food costs but still provide meals that meet the nutritional needs of our students. —Darrin Helfrecht, Billings Public Schools

NuMenus lets me show my students the nutritional value of my meals and some of their favorite foods! Some of them are pretty interested in the saturated fat levels and want to help me plan a week of menus! —Vicky Skaggs, Drummond Schools

The cycle menus feature is very helpful. I can reduce the time it takes to do menu planning by setting up menus once and then using them over and over. I have a 14-week menu cycle and it's all easily edited. —Gary Field, Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility

I was really surprised and pleased when we found we could still use many of the same recipes and menus we had been with only slight modifications. —Robin Solberg, Westby Public Schools

It has saved us tons of time in completing the paperwork as we not only use the nutrient analysis module, but also the production and inventory packages. —John Holmes, Havre Public Schools

My staff and I are really actually enjoying the new system. It provides us with a lot of flexibility in choosing menu items and portion sizes. —Wanda Sand, Fairfield School

For more information on the NuMenus system, please call OPI, School Food Services (444-2501).



# High school students attend public affairs journalism workshop

When they think of their future, teenagers have several questions. If we do know which road to follow after high school, we may wonder how to reach that road or which fork to choose. The *Public Affairs Journalism Workshop* held by the University of Montana Journalism School in Helena on April 3-5, 1997, provided some much-needed direction for 20 high school students from Polson, Cut Bank, Lustre, and Helena.

## The workshop

At this three-day workshop, an abundance of information was available ... enough to overload the average teenager. But, there didn't seem to be any average teenagers participating. In fact, their politeness, hard work, and dedication were remarkable. We were taught how to interview properly, politely extract precise answers from public officials, and where to go for information. Our assignment: put together an insert for the *Helena Independent Record* (IR) on legislative issues.

## Gathering information

After brief introductions, students divided into "teams," each choosing an issue to report. The first day at the Capitol, House Speaker John Mercer treated us to a short but animated press conference. Each of us had a chance to question Speaker Mercer on his ideas about our respective issues. We then covered every inch of the Capitol questioning lobbyists, legislators, clerks, heads of important organizations, coffee vendors, and our advisors for information that would be helpful in writing our articles.

The next day, we observed Governor Racicot's weekly press conference. After the

professional journalists were finished, the governor graciously answered a few of our questions. We used the remainder of the day to gather information before retiring to the IR offices.

## Getting it down on paper

When we reached the IR, we started work immediately. The student editorial board, consisting of one writer from each team, met with the head of the IR's editorial board. He gave us some ideas on writing our opinion article about educational funding. The photographers set to work on the IR's powerful computers, developing their pictures and having some fun learning new software.

The next morning, we worked on layout, using *Quark Express* software to put together the six pages in our insert. Each team resembled a flock of eager birds perched around their computer screens. A group photo shoot capped off a fast-paced morning.

## In review

As the groups dwindled and students went their respective ways, each of us had an opportunity to reflect on the workshop. Through the grueling pace, long

hours, and intense work, we all learned something and took a great deal home. Whether it was information or experience, it is invaluable.

## Thanks

The people responsible for setting this workshop up include UM Journalism School Dean Frank Allen, UM staffer Carol Thurkill, IR Editor Charles Wood, Lustre Christian High School journalism advisor Chris Syme, who had the original idea for the workshop, and all the other high school advisors. We know that intense planning and hard work went into this. On behalf of the other participants, I would like to say that it was well worth the effort. It's an experience none of us will ever forget! ■

—Becca Syme, student, Lustre Christian High School

## High School/High Tech

The demand for research scientists, engineers, mathematicians, computer programmers, and technicians has never been greater. Today's workplace is driven by education and training, familiarity with sophisticated technology, and the ability to think critically and solve problems. Fewer and fewer jobs rely on physical dexterity. Because of these changes and the availability of assistive technology, young people with disabilities can aspire to an expanding range of career opportunities. The challenge is to help them get the education and training that will allow them to pursue these opportunities.

To answer that challenge, the High School/High Tech program, promoted by the federal President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, is introducing science and technology jobs to

(Continued on page 11)

## Montana Natural History Center sponsors third annual Clark Fork Watershed Festival

### 800 Missoula-area students take part in event

Mush some playdough into the shape of a mountain. Add a few hills and a valley. Spray it with blue water. What do you get? Ask a sixth-grader from the Missoula area and the answer might be, "a watershed."

## Festival participation

In April, 32 classes of Missoula-area sixth-graders took part in the third annual Clark Fork Watershed Festival and learned about watersheds by building one in their classroom. Thirty volunteers visited classrooms the first week of April to introduce the watershed unit. They returned a couple of weeks later for a second visit after teachers had supplemented that information with lessons and activities about watersheds.

## A day in the park

The beginning of May brought the Festival's highlight. On May 1 or 2, students took a field trip to Missoula's McCormick Park to take part in workshops on a gamut of watershed issues, from geography and ecology to how humans affect water quality. Presenters included representatives from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Project Wet Montana, the U.S. Forest Service

(USFS), Trout Unlimited, and graduate students from the University of Montana.

"The Festival has received rave reviews from the teachers involved," said Wendy Moore,

have learned. This year, projects included a quilt, paper mache habitats and poetry contest entries, all of which were on display at the Art Museum *Water Weighs* exhibit.

## Festival background

The Clark Fork Watershed Festival began as a project of the Tri-State Implementation Council. Composed of representatives from state agencies, counties, cities, tribes, citizen groups, businesses and industries in Montana, Idaho, and Washington, the council was set up in 1993 to oversee the implementation of the Environmental Protection Agency's Clark Fork-Pend Oreille Management Plan. The Festival is one of several projects the council designed to educate the public about the public's role in protecting and maintaining water quality.

The Montana Natural History Center, which cosponsored the first two festivals, formally adopted the Watershed Festival as one of their programs for 1997. "It's a natural for us to take on this program," said Moore. "We are involving community experts, training a cadre of interested volunteers, and working to integrate the program into the

school curriculum. I believe we can have a tremendous impact on water quality over the years."

This year's Clark Fork Watershed Festival reached over 800 students from Washington, C.S. Porter, Rattlesnake, Hellgate, Frenchtown, Target Range and Bonner schools.

## Festival sponsors

This event has attracted a broad array of supporters from non-profit organizations, agencies, businesses and industries. Supporters for the 1997 Festival include: *Mountain Water Company; Missoula Conservation District; ARCO; McDonald Gold Project; Missoula Water Quality District; City-County Health Department; Montana FWP; Browning Ferris Industries; USFS; Missoula Wastewater Treatment Plant; Riparian and Wetlands Research Program; Montana Power Company; MT Department of Environmental Quality/Water Quality Division; Project WET Montana; Boone and Crockett Club; MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Community Forestry Division; Tri-State Implementation Council; Beach Transportation; Southgate Mall; Land and Water Consulting; Shannon Environmental Management; and, last but not least, McGowan Water Conditioning.* ■



Students take part in McCormick park activities during last year's Watershed festival.

festival director. "And the kids seem to love it. It's so much more than a science lesson. The activities incorporate science, social studies and art. We encourage kids to explore how people fit into the bigger picture."

The Watershed Festival also encourages each class to create an art project reinforcing what they



"Dispatches" are updates by Office of Public Instruction staff. Staff members may be reached at the phone numbers listed or by writing them at the Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501.

**Division of  
Academic & Professional Services  
Linda Peterson, Administrator**

Science-Mathematics Consortium for Northwest Schools (SMCNWS)  
Patricia B. Johnson, State Coordinator  
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The Science and Mathematics Consortium for Northwest Schools (SMCNWS), one of ten regional consortia established by Congress, works to improve science and mathematics teaching in Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska.

#### Grant Writing Workshop

On October 15, 1997, right before the MEA/MFT Educators' Conference, SMCNWS is sponsoring a one-day session for serious grant seekers in Billings. Districts should consider sending the person who writes funding proposals for their schools.

Attendance is limited to 15 and participants are required to submit a concept paper prior to the training session. The presenter will give an overview of proposal writing and funding sources and then give participants personal assistance on the proposal idea in their concept paper. Contact me at the number above for application guidelines.

#### Introduction to grant writing for new proposal writers

For those interested in learning about the grant writing process, SMCNWS is also sponsoring two, two-hour sessions during the MEA/MFT Educators' Conference in Billings on October 16-17. Participants will be introduced to and learn about the steps in writing a proposal and will learn where to find funding sources.

#### POTLATCH

The collection and dissemination of promising practices is a major regional task of the Science and Mathematics Consortium. That collection, to be published under the title of *POTLATCH: Sharing Our Best*, offers educators the opportunity to recognize the great programs in our state. After a program is nominated, the program director will receive a form to provide specific details. Nominations must come from outside the school housing the program. Possible nominators are people—parents, teachers, administrators—who know the program from another school or district or from OPI staff.

Please contact me at the above number for a POTLATCH nomination form.

#### New on SMCNWS Web Page

SMCNWS has several new additions and updates to the regional web page <<http://www.col-ed.org/smcnws>>. We have recently formed a partnership with Microsoft, which will be using our lesson plans in its new Encarta release. You can find these lessons at <<http://www.col-ed.org/cur/>>.

Performance assessment task examples are being collected at <<http://www.col-ed.org/smcnws/assesstask.html>>. Equity resources are at <<http://www.col-ed.org/smcnws/equity>>. Math, science or technology professional development events in the Northwest are listed by state at the following addresses: Montana: <<http://www.col-ed.org/mt/confer.htm>>; Alaska: <<http://www.col-ed.org/ak/Events.html>>; Idaho: <<http://www.col-ed.org/id/idpdo.html>>; Oregon: <<http://www.col-ed.org/or>> under "Upcoming Conferences..."; and Washington: <<http://www.col-ed.org/wa/prodev.html>>.

The SMCNWS-Montana web page is located at <<http://col-ed.org/mt/>>. Most public libraries provide web access. Please let me know of any conferences, events, workshops, or news that should be included on the Montana web site.

**Division of  
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#### Resource for parents

The following resource may be a good source of information for parents and parent organizations.

#### New family guide available

*Open Up, Listen Up!—Family Communication about Sexual Health* is a collection of pamphlets, activities, multimedia reviews and listings of interactive web sites. The packets include answers to parent's questions about adolescent sexuality, pregnancy, HIV and other STD's and suggestions on how to talk with youth on sensitive

topics. *Open Up, Listen Up!* also features the newest edition of Advocates for Youth's renowned *Talking With TV*. This 50-page handbook is the definitive guide for parents who want to make television a catalyst for discussing sensitive sexuality and relationship issues.

Available in two versions—one for young people ages 11 through 13, and another for young adults ages 14 through 18—each *Open Up, Listen Up!* parent packet includes the latest on adolescent sexuality and the media, sexuality education information, and conversation-starters. Each packet also includes materials specifically designed for young readers with activities that young people and adults can explore together.

The packet costs \$20 plus shipping and handling. It can be ordered from Advocates for Youth, 1025 Vermont Avenue, N.W. Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005. Call for quantity orders (tel: 202-347-5700; fax: 202-347-2263).

**Division of  
Educational Opportunity & Equity  
B.J. Granbery, Administrator**

#### Title I

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#### 1997 Partners in Teaching and Learning Fall Conference

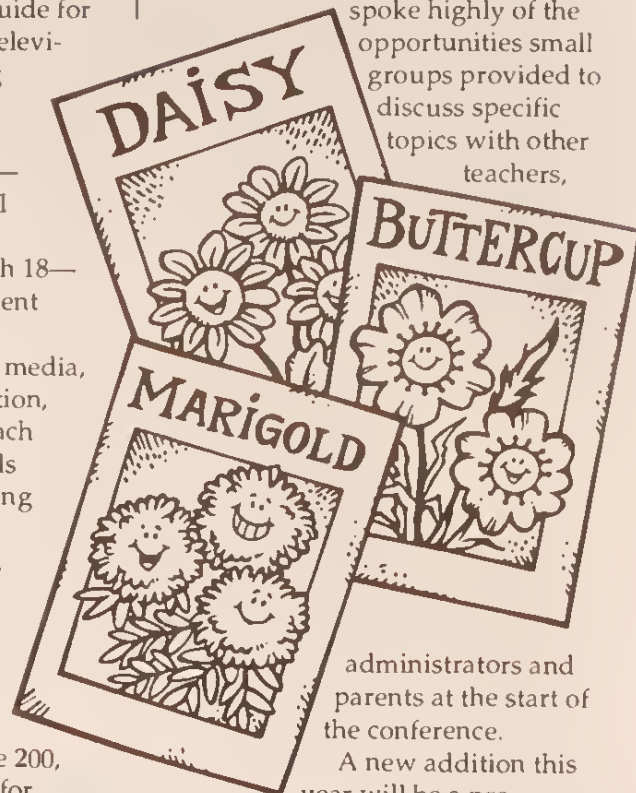
This year's *Partners in Teaching and Learning* Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Billings Plaza and Trade Center on October 1-3, 1997. The program of professional development and school improvement will feature many of the successful Montana school programs which have been developed to help all students meet high standards.

#### Conference format

The conference format will be similar to last year's, with facilitators leading roundtable discussions

on a wide variety of topics starting at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Last year's 860 conference participants

spoke highly of the opportunities small groups provided to discuss specific topics with other teachers,



administrators and parents at the start of the conference.

A new addition this year will be a pre-

conference session on *Title I Assessment and Determining Adequate Yearly Progress*, exploring both the definition and measurement of "adequate yearly progress" and how schools will be held accountable to achieve it. While this session is open to all, space permitting, specific teams will be urged to attend through additional letters of invitation. Time and room number will be announced.

#### Presentations and professional development opportunities

The first General Session will begin at 9:00 a.m. Thursday morning with introductions by Nancy Coopersmith, Administrator, Department of Accreditation and Curriculum Services; a welcome message by Nancy Keenan, State Superintendent; and a keynote address. The arrangements for our keynote speaker have not yet been finalized.

During the remainder of the conference, participants will be able to choose from a variety of one and two-hour presentations and discussions on issues and strategies.

Categories include Title I (Education of Disadvantaged, including Neglected, Delinquent, At-Risk Youth, and Even Start Family Literacy Programs), Title II (Professional Development Programs), Title IV (Safe and Drug-Free Schools Programs), and Title VI (Innovative Programs). Presentations related to services provided under Indian, Bilingual, Migrant, Vocational, School-to-work, Homeless, and Special Education programs will also be included. Program presenters will be experienced personnel from Montana schools, colleges and universities, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, NW Regional Assistance Center, OPI, and other education organizations.

#### Program proposals are invited

If you are interested in submitting a presentation proposal for the 1997 *Partners in Teaching and Learning Conference*, please refer to the reduced copy of the proposal form to the left. The deadline for propos-

REQUEST FOR PROGRAM PROPOSAL	
MONTANA 1997 PARTNERS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING CONFERENCE OCTOBER 1-3, 1997 HOLIDAY INN PLAZA AND CONVENTION CENTER BILLINGS, MONTANA	
DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: MAY 30, 1997	
Presenters must pay the \$30 preregistration fee	
1	Submitted by _____ Address _____ Day phone number _____
2	Give a short descriptive title of your presentation as you wish it to appear in the program. _____
3	Indicate the TARGET AUDIENCE(S) for which the presentation is appropriate. (i.e., K-12, K-5, K-6, 7-8, 9-12, Parents, Administrators) _____
4	List name(s) and job title(s) of presenter(s) _____
5	Summarize contact person _____ Home address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ Home phone _____
6	Summary of presentation: Write approximately 25 words as you wish it to appear in the program. _____
7	Special equipment needed _____ (All presentation rooms will have an overhead projector and screen.)
8	Preferred room arrangement: Theatre _____ Classroom _____ (Requests for classroom style must be confirmed by Conference Coordinator)
MAIL OR FAX COMPLETED FORM TO: Title I Office of Public Instruction P.O. Box 202501 Helena, MT 59620-2501 Fax: 406-444-3924	



als is May 30, 1997. For more information, to submit your proposals, or to receive a full-size copy of the form, please contact Gwen Smith at OPI ( fax: 444-3924; email: <gsmith@opi. mt.gov>).

## Conference registration

Conference registration forms have been mailed to all schools. Please check with your building administrator for a copy. The registration form has also been posted on METNET Online in the *Title I* and *News* areas. The early registration fee is \$30—to qualify send your registration form and check (made payable to OPI Partners Conference) before September 5, 1997. If payment is not received by then, the fee will increase to \$50. All persons with prepaid registrations will be able to pick up their name tag and conference materials at a specially marked area in the Atrium of the Holiday Inn Plaza. While refund requests will be honored only if they are made in writing prior to September 30, 1997, substitutions for prepaid staff will be allowed.

A tentative agenda will be mailed to schools and posted on METNET Online in early fall. See you in Billings!

**Division of Vocational & Adult Services**  
**Joanne Erickson, Administrator**

**Family & Consumer Sciences**  
**Laurie Stelter, Specialist**  
**444-2059**  
**lstelter@opi.mt.gov**

## Mark your calendar

On your mark...get set...GO! ...to

Billings, June 16 - 18, 1997, for the Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher Update Conference! Content will focus on Occupational Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS)—how to develop a School-to-Work component, what other states are doing, and how Montana's Educational Linkages Handbook and occupational competencies gathered from Montana employers (you'll receive these) complete the puzzle.

Take home marketing strategies, competency/assessment instruments, and ideas and action plans to integrate FCS content with other subject areas. Find out about opportunities for professional and curriculum development available to you in the 1997-98 school year. Watch your mail for registration materials, and if you have questions, call Dr. Margaret Briggs (994-5015).

## Setting goals for next school year?

You won't want to miss the chance to be involved in the development of the National Skill Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education available to you at the Montana Vocational Association (MVA) meeting in Butte this coming October 16-17, 1997.

Nancy Terwilliger-Grube, president of the Family and Consumer Sciences division of MVA, has arranged for the Skill Standards Project Director

an employment advisor with the President's Committee.

## Why it works

The High School/High Tech program is built upon a partnership between community members, schools, and businesses. Each project is unique, tailored to the needs, interests, and resources of the individual community.

The current projects have proven themselves cost-effective because the relatively low cost of conducting the project and the ease with which it can be carried out provide a practical means of engaging the interests and talents of students with disabilities.

Finally, the program reaches students. Often frustrated by the lack of outside encouragement, students with disabilities readily respond to the practical, outreach efforts. They are eager to explore

Barbara Border to meet with the delegation in Butte so that Montana's FCS professionals will have the opportunity to provide input into what will become a national document that will help to shape what students should know and be able to do in family and consumer sciences education.

She is holding focus groups all over the nation, the results of which will be incorporated into the content of the final document.

If you come to Butte, your professional expertise can assist in generating a product that will be of use for curriculum definition, development, and reform all over the nation.

**School-to-Work**  
**Marion Reed, Specialist**  
**444-3000**  
**mreed@opi.mt.gov**

## Tech Prep defined

Many of you may have heard or are hearing the term *Tech Prep*. Although School-to-Work and *Tech Prep* can be related and the terms are often used interchangeably, it is important to note that they are not synonymous. Hopefully, the following explanation of *Tech Prep* will provide some clarification.

## Carl Perkins funding

*Tech Prep* projects are funded under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education federal legislation. The federal program has been in place for several years now and fits into School-to-Work and other education improvement initiatives. *Tech*

*Prep* projects are designed to do several things, such as further the integration of academics and vocational education, develop career paths, and plan two-plus-two programs between high schools and post-secondary institutions.

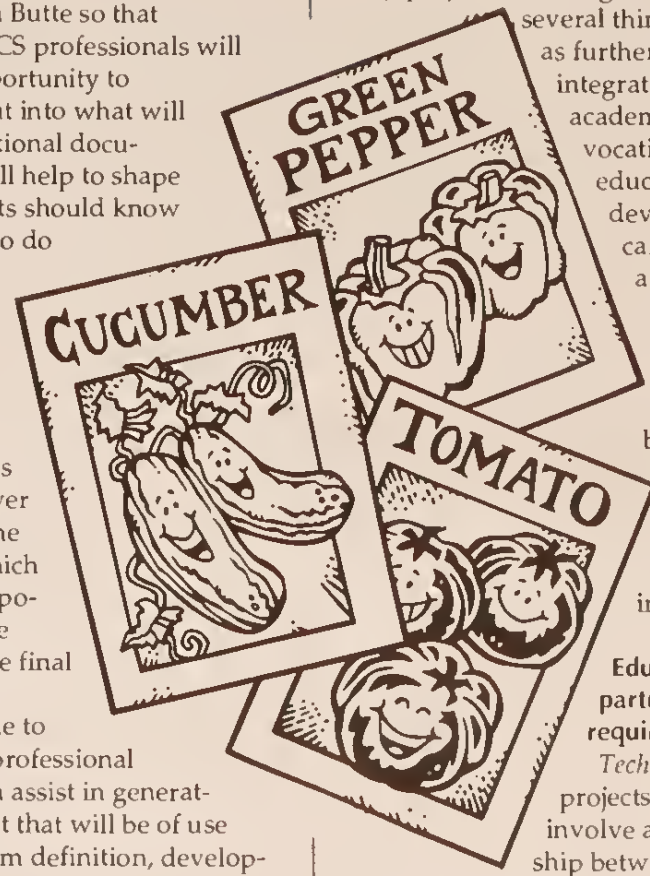
**Educational partnership required**  
*Tech Prep* projects must involve a partnership between a

secondary and a postsecondary program. Almost all of the projects in Montana have formed through consortiums involving several secondary school districts working together with one or more postsecondary programs. Currently, Montana has about eight ongoing projects that are funded. These projects represent various levels of activities and provide students with a variety of programs that cross almost all of the traditional vocational education lines.

In addition, groups from across the state have also articulated approximately 350 additional programs. This number grows each year.

## Future trends

As Congress works with the reauthorization of the Carl Perkins legislation, the tendency to place more emphasis on *Tech Prep* seems to be increasing. This program has already had a positive effect on school programs and will continue to do so.



## High School/High Tech program for students with disabilities

(Continued from page 9)

students with disabilities while they are still in high school so that they begin planning for the future.

## Community-sponsored program

No specific federal grants are earmarked for the High School/High Tech program. As of 1996, however, 13 communities have started their own programs and are now providing students with disabilities with experiences that can include job shadowing; site visits to laboratories, manufacturing plants and high-tech offices; summer seminars; and a job.

Federal or foundation grants, the United Way, JTPA funds, and corporate cash or in-kind donations are all potential sources to start a community program if the interest is there. "The High School/High Tech model is very flexible and each program is distinct," said Richard Sheppard,

an employment advisor with the President's Committee.

## Why it works

The High School/High Tech program is built upon a partnership between community members, schools, and businesses. Each project is unique, tailored to the needs, interests, and resources of the individual community.

The current projects have proven themselves cost-effective because the relatively low cost of conducting the project and the ease with which it can be carried out provide a practical means of engaging the interests and talents of students with disabilities.

Finally, the program reaches students. Often frustrated by the lack of outside encouragement, students with disabilities readily respond to the practical, outreach efforts. They are eager to explore

opportunities to expand their intellectual horizons and pursue careers that offer maximum independence and productivity.

## Measure the results

Of the students who have participated in High School/High Tech programs

- ✓ 85 percent reported the program assisted them in their decision to go to college;
- ✓ 59 percent felt the program helped them improve their school grades;
- ✓ 88 percent indicated that their participation helped them in setting career goals;
- ✓ 77 percent felt their involvement increased self-esteem;
- ✓ 81 percent responded that they improved their relationships with teachers and parents; and

- ✓ 84 percent replied that the program helped them get along with other students.

## In Montana

While most of the current programs have taken root in more urban areas, High School/High Tech programs can be fashioned to fit almost any community. It just takes a little ingenuity, and a willingness to forge a workable partnership between the people, businesses, and schools in a community. ■

To find out more about the High School/High Tech program and how to start one in your community, please contact Richard Sheppard, Program Manager, President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, 1331 F Street NW, 3rd floor, Washington, DC, (voice: 202-376-6200; tdd: 202-376-6200).



Listings in the Bulletin Board do not necessarily imply endorsement by the Office of Public Instruction.

## Summer Workshops for Teachers

### Literacy Learning in the Classroom.

The Helena School District, in conjunction with Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc., is sponsoring a four-day educators' summer institute, *Literacy Learning in the Classroom*. This Institute explores the New Zealand model of literacy learning. Those attending will take an in-depth look at the philosophy of reading and writing. The Institute will be held June 9-12, 1997, in Helena at the Helena Middle School. Cost is \$300 per person, and participants can receive two graduate credits and 26 renewal units. Over 20,000 teachers, administrators, reading specialists, curriculum coordinators, and support staff across the country have attended this Institute over the last seven years. For more information, contact Marsha Davis, Helena Public Schools (447-8521).

### Camp Mak-A-Dream

Camp Mak-A-Dream, a cost free camp for children and young adults with cancer located in Gold Creek, Montana, is seeking to fill 10 paid and over 200 volunteer positions this summer. Positions range from residential to specialized program area staff. Volunteers are asked to work for an eight-day session.

For more information or an application, call 800-484-5890, extension 2267.

### Guitar at Flathead Lake

Guitar workshops will be held June 23-27 at the Dreamcatcher Retreat on Flathead Lake near Polson. Two levels are offered, one for beginners and non-players and one for people who "play some," but are not advanced. Both will give participants an enjoyable immersion in guitar. Instruction is intended for adults and older teens who can use guitar in teaching or community work. College and recertification credit is offered. Cost is \$110 if paid by June 2.

For more information call Susan Hove-Pabst (tel: 605-642-5175; email: <shpabst@rapidnet.com>).

### Math Solutions

This summer the Math Solutions courses, Levels 1 and 2 will

be offered in Helena from July 28-August 1. Both present teachers with practical and proven ways to make the NCTM Standards come alive in mathematics instruction. The level 2 course is for those who have completed the first level and want more instruction. Presented by the Marilyn Burns Education Associates, the class costs \$355 which includes registration, a sample kit of manipulatives, and a copy of *About Teaching Mathematics*. Participants can receive 35 renewal units and 2 college credits.

For more information or to register, call Marilyn Burns Education Associates (415-332-4181 or 800-868-9092).

### Art Retreat

If you are interested in making art, relaxing, networking with other Montana art teachers, and picking up relevant ideas for your art curriculum, come to Western Montana College's (WMC) Teaching Art Retreat at the Birch Creek educational center in Montana's Pioneer Mountains. It will be a week of making art to enjoy.

The retreat is designed so participants can become involved in instruction that interests them and spend intensive time developing artistically. Two credit hours are available. This years presenters include Ron Hirschi, Connie Landis, and Jane Broderick. Estimated cost, including room, board, and tuition is \$400.

For more information, contact Sally Colburn in the WMC Art Department (email: <s\_colburn@wmc.edu>).

### Paleontology course

Timescale Adventures of Choteau, Montana, can now offer three graduate-level semester credits for its 10-day field paleontology course. These professional development credits are being made available through the University of the Pacific, Office of Lifelong Learning. These credits are for professional upgrading and salary advancement only.

The course is taught by David Trexler, MSc., a research paleontologist who has worked in the Choteau area for much of his life.

The 10-day course is designed to provide participants with a well-rounded introduction to most aspects of paleontology, including field and laboratory research methods, and fossil identification. In addition, Montana geology and the legal and ethical considerations in the field of paleontology are discussed. Designed to be enjoyable as well as educational, the course is conducted hands-on at actual research sites.

For more information contact Timescale Adventures, P.O. Box 356, Choteau, Montana 59422. (tel: 800-238-6873 or 466-5410; email: <dtrexler@3rivers.net>).

# CALENDAR

## May

22: Montana Council of Deans of Education, University of Great Falls—Dr. Randy Hitz, 994-6792  
22-23: Board of Public Education, Helena—Sandee Henselbecker, 444-0302

## June

9-12: Literacy Learning in the Classroom, Helena—Marsha Davis 447-8521  
9-27: Advanced Driver Education Workshops, Lewistown—Curt Hahn, OPI, 444-4432  
23-25: Montana School Food Association Conference, Billings Plaza Holiday Inn—Jaybe Elwess, Conference Chair, 278-5521  
25-27: Montana Association of Pupil Transportation (MAPT) Workshops and Conference, Great Falls Holiday Inn—Cheryl Thares, MAPT, 791-2217  
25-27: Rural Education Seminar, Capitol Building, Helena—Cheryl Johanes, WMC, 683-7243

## July

1: Montana Council of Deans of Education, Helena—Dr. Randy Hitz, 994-6792  
16-18: CSPAC, Helena—Peter Donovan, 444-0301  
7-18: Advanced Driver Education Workshops, Lewistown—Curt Hahn, OPI, 444-4432  
16-18: CSPAC, Helena—Peter Donovan, 444-0301

## August

12-16: Montana ASCD Curriculum Leadership Conference for teacher leaders, principals, superintendents, and curriculum specialists,

Cavanaugh's Inn Kalispell—Fred Seidensticker, Golden Triangle Curriculum Coop, 434-2745

## September

15-17: Superintendents' Fall Conference, Great Falls Heritage Inn—School Administrators of Montana, 442-2510  
18: Montana Council of Deans of Education, MSU-Billings—Dr. Randy Hitz, 994-6792  
19-21: Montana Mathematics And Science Society (MMASS) Conference 1997, Livingston—George Burns, OPI, 444-1852  
22: MEA/MFT Montana Teacher Forum, Helena—Debbie Hanna, MEA, 442-4250 or Andy Sever, MFT, 442-2123

## October

1-3: 1997 Partners in Teaching and Learning Conference, Billings Holiday Inn Plaza and Convention Center—Gwen Smith, OPI, 444-5660  
16-17: MEA/MFT Educators' Conference, Billings—Eric Feaver, MEA, 442-4250 or Jim McGarvey, MFT, 442-2123  
16-17: Montana State Reading Conference, Billings—June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664

## November

20: Montana Council of Deans of Education, Bozeman—Dr. Randy Hitz, 994-6792

## December

7-10: State Teacher Education Program Review, Dillon—Don Freshour, OPI, 444-2577

The MISTA process gives us an unbiased method of identifying weaknesses, setting goals, and improving our schools.

—Eileen Johnson, FBMS Principal, Colstrip

This is Eileen Johnson working at her desk on some portion of the MISTA school improvement process.

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